



## St Aidan's RC Primary School

### Published equality information about the context of our school.

#### Equality objectives for the period 2021-2025

This is our published (April 2021) information about our school population and the ways in which we work to eliminate differences of outcome and promote equality for children with protected characteristics. It also explains how we work to eliminate discrimination and inequality. The objectives we have for the next four years reflect the school's context and are at the end of this document.

#### **The school has data on its composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender and by proficiency in English. This is available on request**

We are a medium-sized RC primary school in Ashington. There is also a nursery on site.

At St Aidan's we teach children about their rights, about respect for one another and the wider communities to which they belong. We celebrate individuality and the unique talents and characteristics of each child. Equality principles underpin our values and ethos.

A small minority of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The number of BME (Black and minority ethnic) pupils in our community is smaller than the county and national averages.

Our disadvantaged pupils in respect of whom we receive additional funding are monitored as a discrete group in order to demonstrate that we invest wisely to diminish differences in outcomes for these students compared with their peers. We use the funding effectively to offer academic support and guidance and to subsidise activities and visits. The majority of pupils for whom we obtain additional funding and resources are making and exceeding expected levels of progress. The difference in outcome for this group has diminished and continues to decrease.

Objectives relating to children eligible for Free School Meals have a high priority, although financial disadvantage is not a protected characteristic in law, it is a significant priority for schools. Evidence shows that disadvantaged children are likely to have suffered the greatest learning loss during school closures due to the global pandemic.

In school, we represent, discuss and welcome family diversity and the positive aspects of individuality in families.

We are purposeful in the way we represent people and use language in resources displays and communication. We consciously use and develop awareness of

inclusive language. This is an ongoing piece of work, as language changes constantly.

We respectfully challenge any member of the school community who expresses their prejudice or discomfort towards people with some or any of the protected characteristics; our priority is to protect every member of our community from prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

Our school uniform policy is flexible and the guidance does not discriminate against any child on the basis of gender, race, disability, gender identity or belief. Practical alternatives are acceptable.

**The school has data on its composition broken down by types of disability and special educational need. This is available on request.**

Our school has clear protocols and targeted provision to support these pupils who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The school is an accessible building, with ramps, accessible toilets and wheelchair accessible routes.

The school uses a graduated approach to identify anything that affects a child's ability to learn, then we use strategies and interventions to help improve the situation. Learners and their families are always involved in this process.

The school welcomes and offers a high level of support to a growing number children with additional needs. We are very committed to ensuring that learners with SEND enjoy the same opportunities as other children.

We think about inequalities of outcome and involvement when setting objectives for achievable and measurable improvements. These are outlined in the school's accessibility plan and action plan.

We record and report instances of discriminatory language or bullying. Our PSHE curriculum is one of the ways in which we reinforce this commitment to anti-discriminatory practice. It also ensures that children learn about safe and respectful relationships.

During Anti-Bullying Week the school works to raise awareness and build resilience and confidence in the children.

Staff are aware of the vulnerability of people in our region to messages about far right extremism, and welcome open discussion and debate with the children in order to dispel myths and misconceptions.

We recognise the limited opportunities for some children to experience the wider UK and urban contexts that exist outside Northumberland. We work to ensure that children are prepared to live in a diverse society in the wider context of modern Britain.

The school records data about religion and belief if it is provided by parents. This enables us to say with confidence that we are inclusive of pupils' religion and beliefs.

### **Documentation and record-keeping**

Our school has a statement of overarching equality policy which is published to the web site.

### **Responsibilities**

All staff have responsibility for promoting equality.

All staff have responsibility for promoting the school's anti-bullying ethos.

### **Staffing**

There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff

### **Behaviour and safety**

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

The school annually returns a report on the number of racist incidents to the Local Authority.

Surveys and focus groups show that most pupils feel safe from all kinds of bullying. The mechanisms we have include Parentview, a parent forum that meets twice a year and the pupil voice.

The school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies are available on the school web site.

### **Curriculum**

There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding.

There are activities across the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Consultation and involvement**

The school has procedures for consulting and involving parents and carers, and for engaging with local groups and organisations, and has regard in these for the concerns and requirements of the Equality Act.

The school has procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school, and has regard in these for the concerns of the Equality Act.

## **Part Two: Objectives**

The Public Sector Equality Duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. The duty applies to the public sector and to others carrying out public functions. The duty applies to all nine areas of discrimination listed in the Equality Act 2010.

Our school has defined three main areas of equality to address:

### **Objective 1: Advance Equality of Opportunity: Lost Learning**

What we plan to do

The impact of the Covid 19 crisis on our school has impacted disadvantaged pupils more than other pupils in the amount of lost learning that they have experienced.

Although contact was maintained, work sent home and government funded devices were distributed to families, not every pupil has returned to full time school with the same level of learning having been sustained.

Addressing the lost learning for all of the pupils who are in this position will be a key priority for the school over the next four years.

Using any additional government funding, such as Catch Up, the devices we obtained to facilitate home learning and targeted interventions, we will be working to eliminate the disadvantage experienced by any children who did not access home learning during the school closures. Most of this will be done in-house, making the most of the expertise of staff who know the children well.

#### **Expected evidence of impact:**

The school will regularly review and define which strategies are our most effective in terms of cohort, characteristic and identified need.

### **2. Fostering Good Relations: Life in Modern Britain**

What we plan to do:

We recognise the context of Ashington and the relative lack of opportunity our pupils experience to engage with role models from communities better represented in other parts of the UK (LGBT, BAME, disabled people, people of different faiths). We recognise the important role that the school can play in opening up the children's awareness of the wider context of the UK beyond Northumberland, in preparing them for adult life and an appreciation of the wider diversity of the UK and beyond.

Through the curriculum, PSHE and assemblies we will continue to extend the range of opportunities the children have to engage with themes such as family diversity, anti-racism, global learning, human rights, disability equality, anti-discriminatory language and behaviour, tolerance and mutual respect and the role of the bystander.

Expected evidence of impact:

Increased awareness of global inequalities and challenges articulated by pupils.

Ability to challenge discriminatory thoughts and practices.

Children acting as allies and advocates, respecting and protecting the rights of others.

Continued commitment to helping, fundraising and learning about disadvantaged people who need help and support.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Eliminate discrimination/Advance Equality of Opportunity: Emotional resilience and mental health**

What we plan to do:

The school was an early adopter of the new, statutory elements of RSHE, and has a strong PSHE curriculum.

The Ten:Ten RSHE curriculum resource being used, along with Ashington being included in the Mental Health Trailblazers pilot in 20/21 create a strong basis for the objective we have set which is to prioritise the emotional resilience and mental health of all of our children.

A new Mental Health Lead in school will be appointed in 2021.

Preventative work is being prioritised; the school has a MH First Aid trained member of staff.

Staff attend regular Hive (Mental Health Trailblazers) meetings, and are attuned to the additional challenges and difficulties children and young people have experienced during the global pandemic.

Expected evidence of impact:

Children and young people have trusted adults in school to whom they can refer when pressures and concerns overwhelm them.

Staff are trained to offer therapeutic interventions (e.g Sand tray therapy).

We seek prompt diagnosis for children and young people who may require this, and make prompt referrals into specialist cycles of support if needed.

*These objectives replace the previous equality objectives set in April 2016.*

*Progress against the objectives will be reviewed annually, and they will remain our objectives until April 2025, when they are due to be refreshed*